

## Tripod Survey Assessments: Multiple Measures of Teaching Effectiveness and School Quality

### Assessment Tools for Measuring Classroom Effectiveness

Why do some classrooms produce much more learning than others, even with similar students?

What aspects of teaching practice make some teachers more effective at helping students learn?

Tripod assessments measure the impact of effective teaching and student engagement to help answer these and other important questions.

### Overview of the Service

Developed and refined over the past ten years, Tripod surveys and analysis methods have helped more than 300,000 students communicate about their classroom experiences. Tripod services comprise a well-designed, classroom-level data collection, analysis and reporting system.

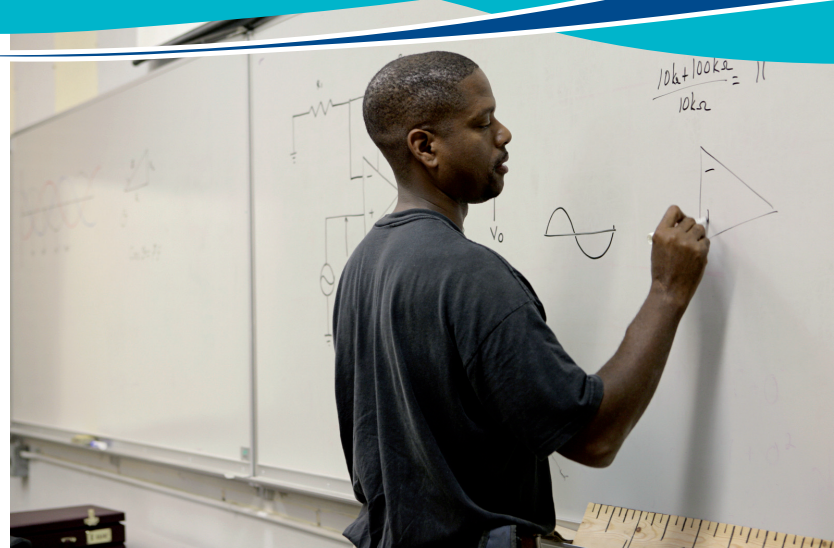
Tripod assessments have been used in hundreds of schools and thousands of classrooms in the U.S., Canada and China, providing insights about teaching effectiveness and the determinants of student performance. The surveys measure multiple domains of teaching practice and student engagement.

They comprise:

- Student surveys on classroom conditions, tailored for grade levels K-2, 3-5 and 6-12
- Teacher surveys focused on pedagogy, teacher-student relations, and working conditions
- Parent surveys measuring home-school relations and parenting practices

### Expanding Beyond Observations and Test Scores

Classroom observations have often been the primary or even the sole method of acquiring teacher-specific information about K-12 instruction. But no observer, no matter how well trained, has more first-hand experience in any particular classroom than the students. Tripod student questionnaires are designed to capture key dimensions of classroom life and teaching practice as students experience them.



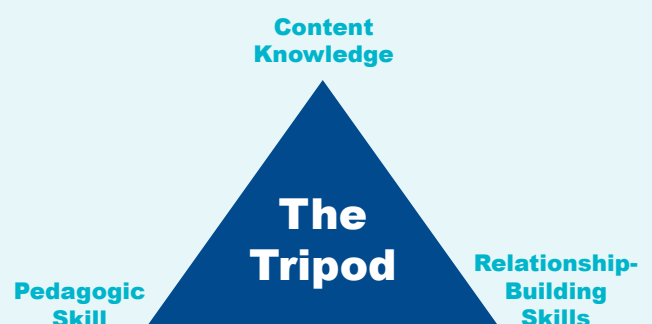
Tripod surveys provide reliable, detailed and validated insights on teaching and learning in any classroom, including classrooms not tested with standardized exams.

When requested, Tripod researchers can provide “value-added” analyses to demonstrate how student responses predict year-to-year learning gains as measured by standardized test scores, thus demystifying an important consideration in teaching effectiveness.

Student survey responses are reported out to clients according to Tripod “quality values” across multiple dimensions. Quality scores are available at the classroom, school and district levels. Findings can inform discussions about school quality and whole-school priorities, and give a fresh new focus to teacher professional development and student engagement projects.

### A Validated Conceptual Foundation

Tripod activities are grounded in a comprehensive conceptual framework that emphasizes the importance of an instructional “tripod” of content knowledge, pedagogical skill and relationships.



A suite of multi-item indicators capture students' academic and social behaviors, goals, beliefs and feelings. Student engagement and achievement are conceptually and empirically predicted by seven, multi-item measures covering key domains of teaching effectiveness.

These teaching effectiveness measures are referred to as the **7Cs**. The 7C's of classroom-level instructional practice are:

- ✓ **Caring** about students (nurturing productive relationships);
- ✓ **Controlling** behavior (promoting cooperation and peer support);
- ✓ **Clarifying** ideas and lessons (making success seem feasible);
- ✓ **Challenging** students to work hard and think hard (pressing for effort and rigor);
- ✓ **Captivating** students (making learning interesting and relevant);
- ✓ **Conferring** (eliciting students' feedback and respecting their ideas);
- ✓ **Consolidating** (connecting and integrating ideas to support learning).

Student responses on Tripod surveys have been linked to achievement gains in surveyed classrooms for math, science and English. These same concepts are embedded in Tripod's teacher survey, and the parent surveys focus on home-school relations and parenting practices relative to school objectives and student progress.

### Delivered by Cambridge Education

The Tripod Project was founded a decade ago by Dr. Ronald Ferguson of Harvard University. Since 2007, the Project has been supported through a partnership between Dr. Ferguson and Cambridge Education, well known globally for school quality reviews and other school improvement services. Cambridge Education is a leading provider of education services with over 25 years of experience working in more than 45 countries. In the United States it has partnered with over 2,500 schools in more than 200 districts across 25 states.

The Tripod Project research database includes response data from hundreds of schools in every part of the country and in districts representing urban, suburban and rural settings.

The support Cambridge Education provides includes:

- **Project Management** for survey tailoring, administration and data collection.
- **Capacity Building** to ensure clients develop the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain high quality implementation over time.
- **Survey Data Management**, including processing, quality assurance, analysis and reporting of survey results.
- **Technical Assistance**, including initial orientation and ongoing support for state, district, and school personnel who coordinate the effective use of Tripod data at the local level.

Costs vary depending on the scale of the survey deployment, level of customization, and nature of data analysis and reporting. Every effort is made to ensure that implementation is efficient, cost effective, and of the highest practical utility.

### Recent Large Scale Engagements

The following are recent large scale deployments of Tripod assessments.

**GATES FOUNDATION.** The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is conducting a large scale project titled the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project. Using both online and paper versions, over 80,000 student surveys were deployed during 2010 across six districts, accompanied by detailed protocols for survey administration and data collection.

**MEMPHIS, TN.** Data were collected in all Memphis City Schools and analyzed to provide validated measures of teaching effectiveness for each teacher in the district. A raw data set with detailed documentation was also provided to the district enabling additional, internal analysis.

**NOVA SCOTIA.** In an effort to address achievement gaps across the Province, the Department of Education engaged Cambridge Education and the Tripod Project to design and implement a research-based school climate survey with classroom and school level measures. Results were compiled at district, school and classroom levels, by gender, race and grade point average.



### Further Information

#### Contact Rob Ramsdell

Email: [rob.ramsdell@camb-ed-us.com](mailto:rob.ramsdell@camb-ed-us.com)

Tel: 781-915-0005

Visit [www.tripodproject.org](http://www.tripodproject.org) and [www.camb-ed-us.com](http://www.camb-ed-us.com)

